

The Nebraska Numismatic Association

JOURNAL

Official publication of the Nebraska Numismatic Association

January 2006



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THE NEBRASKA NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

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Larry Lee, Editor
NNA Journal
PO Box 6194
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From the Editor

We received a lot of positive feedback on the new look of the *NNA Journal*. Thank you all for your comments. Jim McKee sent a nice hand-written note "via fountain pen" and several other readers were kind enough to email or mention the new layout as well. We are trying to improve in content and design with each issue and we thank you for your patience.

Please take a moment to look at the address label on the back cover of this *NNA Journal*. If your address label has a color highlight on the date 2005, it means your dues are now due! Technically, you will NOT receive your next issue of NNAJ in the mail without renewing your membership. Send your \$5.00 dues (how cheap is that!) to Matt Hansen c/o Nebraska Numismatic Association, P.O. Box 5575, Lincoln, NE 68505.

As published elsewhere in this issue, the fourfold advertising rate increase foretold in the previous issue has taken effect. If your advertisement is not in this issue, it is because we have not heard from you regarding the new rates. Several companies did make note of the rate increase and sent in their new copy (and \$\$!) accordingly. The majority of past advertisers did not. Undoubtedly, most of this is due to lack of sufficient time to get new digital advertising copy made. We anticipate the next issue will be filled with new advertisers. There is still plenty of prime ad space available.

One of the subjects in the previous *Journal* was the Nebraska State quarter design. We find it timely that Q. David Bowers, the dean of American coins, thinks the Nebraska quarter is one of the nicest yet. "While art and beauty are in the eye of the beholder," he said in a recent *Coin World* column, "to my mind the forthcoming Nebraska quarter dollar featuring Chimney Rock is an ideal example of a beautiful design." The *Journal* will be publishing more on the Nebraska quarter as the date for its release nears.

In this issue of your *Journal*, Frank Mills shares his thoughts on "maverick" trade tokens; we have a book review of a three-volume numismatic adventure story titled *The Baroque Cycle*, starring Isaac Newton and the Trial of Pyx; we continue our series on museum coin collections with an article on the University of Nebraska collection, and unfortunately, we have another obituary to publish; this time of our friend Tom Hammond.

In closing, we note that this year is the 300th anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birth in Philadelphia in 1706. Franklin had a long association with numismatic events, including being the designer of the first American medal, the *Libertas Americana*, as well as one of the first American coins, the Fugio cent. The U.S. Mint will be minting two commemorative dollars honoring Franklin in 2006, scheduled for release in just a few weeks on January 19. The coins will be offered in proof and business strike, with a mintage of 250,000 each. France and other countries are likewise honoring Franklin this year.

It thus seems fitting that members of Nebraska's only state numismatic club might also wish to commemorate this great man in some way during 2006 as well. Ideas solicited here. Perhaps a contest where the prize is a \$50 bill with Franklin's picture on it? (caught you-Franklin is on the \$100 bill). Or maybe a display of Franklin half-dollars? Or? Or? . . . Stretch your mind beyond wooden-nickels, elongated cents or plastic tokens. This is Ben Franklin we are talking about here: be inventive, be witty, be wise.

Until next issue,

Larry Lee, Editor
Nebraska Numismatic Association Journal
PO Box 6194
Lincoln, NE 68506
lee@numuserv.com

The Tokens Of Nebraska

By Frank Mills

The era of active "good for" token ended long ago. Where have all the tokens gone? Landfills certainly claimed many. Some think the recycling efforts during WWI claimed many. Yet, tokens seem to appear at unpredictable times and places.

Several years ago, an antique dealer sold this writer several tokens that were found in an old cash register. The items were from a small Nebraska town where a close friend of mine was born and raised. Two years ago, my friend and I had a nice visit about the town, the names on the tokens, and the type of business and points of community interest—namely Saturday night dances. This discussion led one of us to say "wouldn't it be nice if coins and tokens could talk?" Historically, we have all have lost or forgotten a great deal of information about our family history, the names and types of businesses that used to exist, the economic conditions of the era, etc. And that loss represents only the tip of the iceberg.

Thousands of tokens were made without the name of the town or state. These are referred to as "mavericks." Firms that manufactured tokens did not seem to keep good records and there are thousands of tokens with no home.

Identifying mavericks can be tedious and long. *The Token and Medals Society Journal* (TAMS) offers some help, as do past issues of *Takin' Tokens* (TT). The Nebraska State Historical Society also has a library that can occupy most of your spare time in researching mavericks.

This writer enjoys visiting with older persons. Questions about people and businesses sometimes yield interesting conclusions. I have a 93 year-old friend who still has a sound mind and who can

recall many facts from his life in the small town where he grew up. But I have a maverick token that pre-dates even his existence—most likely from the 1800s.

Identification of a maverick token is a never-ending task. When the present generation of seniors pass on, it will become increasingly difficult to preserve our historical past.

Official Business: Dues Reminder

By Matt Hansen, NNA Secretary-Treasurer

2006 has arrived, and with it, the Secretary-Treasurer would like to remind all regular members to please send in their annual NNA membership dues. Dues for 2006 remain at \$5.00, and help cover the cost of printing and mailing the Association's quarterly *Journal*. Please send your 2006 dues to:

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Thank you in advance for getting your dues paid in a timely fashion. It helps the Association pay its bills and continue its responsibility of serving the membership.

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Book Review: *The Baroque Cycle*

A numismatic novel in three volumes

Detective stories and historical novels that include coins as part of their plot usually give numismatics a fairly shallow treatment. The 1913 Liberty nickel that is stolen and then recovered in the *Hawaii Five-0* TV episode "The \$100,000 Nickel", for instance, could just as easily have been an 1804 Draped Bust dollar or a Kellogg \$50 gold piece. The coin is but a prop around which the real story, an object's theft and the subsequent chase and capture of the thief, can be built.

Books with slightly more advanced numismatic plots, such as *The Truth Machine* by James L. Halperin of Heritage, include additional coin minutia such as that the missing coin is a rare variety of a rare date, or some other insider clue.

But to my limited knowledge, no historical novel comes close to weaving as intriguing epic with a numismatic connection as does Neal Stephenson with his three-volume tour-de-force: *The Baroque Cycle*. A plot that covers almost 2,800 pages cannot be neatly summarized in a two-page book review. Suffice to say, if you like well-written historical novels (c. 1670-1714), with depth and detail, you should enjoy *The Baroque Cycle* for its own storyline. But if you have the slightest numismatic bone in your body, you had better set aside the next three weeks as vacation time, because you will not be able to put these books down.

The story revolves around the fictitious Jack Shaftoe, also known as "Jack the Coiner" and "the King of the Vagabonds." The free-spirited Jack and his natural-philosopher friend, David Waterhouse, have developed a strong interest in the purity of

the gold coins of England. Sir Isaac Newton, Master of the Royal Mint, plays a significant role in the story, as do other historical figures including Baron Gottfried von Leibniz and Black Beard the Pirate.

No single coin is the focus of the story. Rather, coinage is treated within its larger economic context: entities of presumed known intrinsic value upon which the nation's economy is based. Or as Newton asks Waterhouse, "Do you, Daniel, really believe that I left the Lucasian Chair of Mathematics at the College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, and came to the Mint, solely out of an interest in *numismatics*?"

The plot culminates in a Trial of Pyx, or official test of the coinage, held within the Tower of London just prior to the Coronation of a new Queen. Along the way, the operation and machinery in the Royal Mint are described, there is a great discussion of *seignorage*, and the contemporary tension between alchemy and "science" is neatly summarized.

Stephenson is a supremely gifted writer with a talent for communicating odors and sounds as well as visual action. One can almost smell seventeenth century London while reading this book. After finishing *The Baroque Cycle*, I read most of Stephenson's other, equally hefty novels, including the brilliant *Cryptonomicon* and the politically insightful *Zodiac*. Though none had a numismatic connection, all were unbelievably fantastic novels that are as finely-crafted as the *Baroque* trilogy.

The three volumes in *The Baroque Cycle* are *Quicksilver*, *The Confusion* and *The System of the World*. They need to be read in order--no fair skipping to the last volume. You'll be glad you waited.

Public Museum, Public Collection: Archie's Coin Collection

Number 2 in a series on Nebraska museum coin collections.



It might come as a surprise to many Nebraska coin collectors to learn that their State Museum once billed itself as being "highly active in Numismatics." The surprise would come from learning that "Elephant Hall" had any coins at all among the bones and fossils in the backrooms of the museum. But at one time in the 1960s and 70s, long before Archie the bronze mammoth graced its front steps, the Nebraska State Museum included a "Division of Numismatics and Philatelics", complete with a "Curator of Numismatics."

As is often the case, the drive and energy behind these projects were the efforts of a single person. In the case of the University of Nebraska's coin collection, that person was Rev. Ian C. G. Campbell, of Weeping Water. And as also often the case, when that person passes from the scene, the life goes out of the project.

Dr. Campbell is another prime candidate for the Nebraska Numismatic Hall of Fame, a project proposed last issue with the nomination of Gunther Kienast as a candidate for inclusion in this mythical structure. Rev. Campbell was well read,

traveled extensively, had an engaging personality and most importantly, was compulsive about collecting coins. He amassed a significant personal collection of Islamic, Byzantine, Turkish and Indian coins, many of which he later gave and/or sold to the University as the basis of their structured collection.

Campbell had acquired many of his coins in Istanbul during World War II, where as a visiting American professor and minister, he was under house arrest much of the war. While in Turkey, Campbell became friends with Michael Grant, who even then was researching his numismatic classic "Roman History from Coins". Thirty years later, Campbell was to use Grant's book as the text for a class on numismatics offered, briefly, by the University of Nebraska's Classics Department.

Campbell was instrumental in publishing several coin hoard discoveries; his most significant literary contribution was "Islamic Coinage: the last frontier in numismatics". Besides belonging to most American numismatic societies, Dr. Campbell was also elected a Fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society of Great Britain, a claim few, if any other Nebraskan can make.

Campbell began his efforts to establish the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) collection around 1955. Until that time, the University's collection consisted of a miscellaneous accumulation of tokens, medals and coins given to the State over the years as mementos, souvenirs, bequests and gifts. The most significant historical items were a group of medals once owned by Williams Jennings Bryan.

Campbell took this modest collection and began to mold it into something much larger. Besides donating coins from his own extensive collection, he also solicited donations from private individuals and local foundations. Over several decades, Campbell built a very nice, broad collection that included about 12,000 coins, tokens, medals and paper currency. The coins included contemporary proof sets as well as ancient bronze and

silver coins. The collection was particularly strong in Byzantine coins, with some pieces of foreign currency and obsolete bank notes included as representative samples. It also included hundreds of plaster casts and reproduction coins as part of a counterfeit research collection. Campbell was even able to wrangle a little exhibit space for a coin display in Morrill Hall, an exhibit several NNA members recall to this day.

Two events of unequal significance occurred in the early 1970s that forever changed the face and fate of the University's coin collection. Unfortunately, Campbell was in the midst of both of these events as well.

The first was an experiment gone awry. Campbell had a large horde of copper Byzantine *folli*, six or seven hundred coins altogether, that were still encrusted from being buried for centuries. While not overly valuable, the coins represented a significant research project and were publishable as a single find if properly researched.

Campbell sent the horde to a "conservator" who said he could remove the debris through an electrolysis process, which he proceeded to do. Unfortunately, the process also removed the entire patina of the coin, including its surface and most of the features and devices. The group was given the name "The Shiny Horde" and was tucked away for further research.

The second event was even more devastating. Dr. Campbell took the cream of the collection's gold and silver coins to London to be researched at the British Museum. While still in Heathrow Airport, on his way to the Museum, Campbell's briefcases containing the coins were stolen and never recovered.

Campbell returned to Nebraska a broken man. The theft of the primary pieces in the collection robbed him of all the enjoyment he received from collecting coins and he gave up the hobby. When his efforts to establish a college-level accredited class at UNL

on numismatics were rebuffed by the chancellor in 1974, Campbell basically lost interest in the University's collection.

For the next several decades, the collection was to sit as Campbell left in, somewhat disorganized, in 2" x 2" holders in a large black safe on the campus of the University of Nebraska. Occasionally, new coins or medals would be donated to the University and would eventually find their way to the same safe.

Overseeing the collection during many of these years was Dr. Thomas Myers, Curator of the University's Anthropology collection. Myers was occasionally able to incorporate coins into temporary exhibits at Morrill Hall. But for all intents and purposes, the University of Nebraska's coin collection went into deep storage.

In 1996, the bulk of the UNL collection was loaned to Durham Western Heritage Museum in Omaha. There, the identification and cataloging of the coins continued in Durham's numismatic research center. Byzantine expert Chris Connell was brought in to assess the "Shiny Horde" as well as the scores of nicer ancient and medieval coins. Colonial coin expert Tom Reynolds of Omaha came and looked at the University's colonial coppers. Lyn Knight came from Kansas City to examine the paper items and numismatic literature dealer Charlie Davis appraised the meager library.

Despite the efforts of these various experts, there were still hundreds of coins that needed identifying, grading and appraising. In 2002, Dr. Myers again allowed the UNL collection to travel on loan to another institution. This time it was temporarily transferred to the Edward C. Rochette Money Museum in Colorado Springs Colorado, where ANA volunteers and staff continued and eventually finished identifying all of the objects in the collection.

While at the ANA, the UNL collection was examined by even more

experts: the late George Fisher identified the hundreds of Chinese coins that Campbell had amassed, the late William Spengler identified the Islamic and Indian coinage, Jerome Walton looked at the Nebraska financial documents, etc., until the entire collection was cataloged and identified in this manner. These men compared the UNL collection with the ANA's holdings and determined which coins would "fill holes" in the ANA's reference collection.

The purpose of all this activity was part of an on-going project by the UNL Anthropology Division to reassess the scope of its collection. Like many older museums, past collecting practices at UNL were rather eclectic and erratic, with no clear mission statement. Many of the non-scientific specialty items (stamps, coins, clocks, etc.) that had been collected in the past by guest curators ended up in the ethnographic collections of the Anthropology Division. When a more precise scope of collection was written for the Division in later years, these collections were judged by informed curatorial staff not to fall under the Museum's research and education mission.

A project to complete the systematic and orderly deaccession of the coin collection was set in motion. The first step to this end was to identify and assess what was in the collection. This is when consultation with outside numismatists became necessary and the collection was sent out for analysis.

In the de-accessioning process, a museum first looks to transfer the material to another museum that has a mission statement related to the objects. In the case of the University's coin collection, an outside consultant, working with Curator Myers, Collection Manager Beth Wilkins and Preparator Will Duly, wrote an assessment of the UN-L collection, with recommendations as to which pieces should be transferred to which institutions.

All agreed that certain coins and medals, perhaps 200 or fewer, should be deaccessioned and given to the Nebraska State

Historical Society. These pieces included all tokens and medals with a specific relevance to the state's history, including the William Jennings Bryan medals and merchant tokens from Nebraska cities and towns. These pieces belonged to Nebraska and deserved to be kept in perpetuity in that State.

The consultant recommended that the horde coinage, in particular the Armenian horde coinage brilliantly identified and published by Campbell and the late Bob Kutcher, should go to the American Numismatic Society in New York, for inclusion in their advanced Armenian collection.

He recommended that the anonymous *foliis* collection of Byzantine coins, the counterfeits and plaster cast coins, the Indian dump coinage, a few Chinese coins and certain of the Islamic coinage should be transferred to the American Numismatic Association Edward C. Rochette Money Museum in Colorado.

Finally, any error coins, patterns, die trials, galvanos, dies, engravings or medals with a numismatic collection were to be deaccessioned to the Gallery Mint Museum in Eureka Springs, Arkansas.

It was recommended that the remaining coins be sold at auction, with no special attention being drawn to the consignor. (An alternative suggestion was to hold a live auction in Nebraska so that coin collectors in the state could have equal access, if not first shot, at their State's deaccessioned collection). Regardless of how any auction is structured, all proceeds from the sale of the UNL coin collection will be used towards the maintenance and enlargement of the remaining University of Nebraska museum collections.

Before this proposed deaccession could be instituted, however, all coins had to be accounted for, with a clear paper trail of ownership established from donor to the University for literally every single object in the collection. If Citizen A donated 100

coins in 1955, all 100 of those coins, and their associated paperwork, had to be located before a single coin could be deaccessioned in 2005. Having 99 of the coins or most of the paper work wasn't enough: strictly speaking, items can only be deaccessioned in the same lot they were donated in.

Consequently, any coins and/or paperwork missing from the collection bogs down the entire de-accessioning process. And while most coins and sub-collections in the UNL collection now stand ready for de-accessioning, there is still a major issue to be resolved before the process can move forward to the final step.

When ANA volunteers finished identifying the University's collection in 2003, the coins were boxed up, labeled and placed together in the ANA Museum's working vault. In 2004, Dr. Myers traveled to Colorado and picked up the collection and returned it to Lincoln. Unfortunately, due to staffing changes at both institutions and an unclear paper trail at ANA, the entire scope of the loan was not realized at the time the loan was called. Once back at UNL, it was determined that some coins, including U.S. proof sets, several sets of Franklin Mint medals, certain American and Chinese coins and the credit card collection, were no longer associated with the collection.

The UNL coins were discovered missing in early 2004 and despite correspondence between the two institutions, many of the coins are still unaccounted for. "Both institutions seem to have made good faith efforts toward meeting the initial project goal under trying circumstances," said Collection Manager Beth Wilkins. "Continuing efforts are being made to retrieve the missing coins."

Because the UNL Museum now runs a skeleton staff in the Anthropology Division, the process of checking in 10,000 or more items is a slow one. The problem is compounded by the fact that

numismatics is not an area the staff is trained in. Nor did either Durham Western Heritage Museum or the ANA provide an outgoing item-by-item identification and/or exit inventory for the collection.

As for the ANA, they stood to benefit from the generous gift of several thousand coins that currently belong to a much-larger organization than itself: the state of Nebraska. It would thus seem reasonable that the ANA would have prioritized this problem and sought to resolve the loan some time ago, both for the State's benefit, as well as for the organization's own professional credibility. Perhaps the ANA underestimated the State of Nebraska's interest in this matter. Certainly by now, two years later, this situation should have been resolved.

Whatever the cause, the Museum's de-accessioning project, or at least that portion dealing with its numismatic collection, is basically on hold until the missing coins can be recovered and processed.

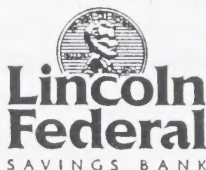
For a brief period in time and space, Dr. Ian C. G. Campbell kept the star of Nebraska numismatics shining as bright as a copper *follis* in a state of electrolysis. That light has now dimmed and will soon be extinguished. Such is the nature of stars. The remaining stellar dust, those coins to be given by the State of Nebraska to other museums, will continue Campbell's elemental existence and will be donated in his name to those institutions worthy enough to continue his legacy.

The systematic destruction of the University of Nebraska's own museum system is an outrage far greater than any football loss that may occur just a few yards to the west of the museum in Memorial Stadium. But Dr. Campbell and the collection he built should and always will be remembered as an important milestone in the development of Nebraska numismatics. Thank you, Dr. Campbell. We who will someday likewise flame out in shining glory, salute you.

Unofficial Business: 2005 MINA Award

Numismatic prize awarded to anachronistic bank

The first annual MINA (Most Ill-informed Numismatic Advertising) award goes to Lincoln Federal Savings, of Lincoln, Nebraska. The firm uses an oversized image of a Lincoln cent as its logo. The problem is the cent is dated 1906, the year of the firm's founding. As every coin-collector worth his Blue Ribbon knows, the Lincoln cent wasn't introduced until 1909, 100 years after Lincoln's birth, and 3 years after the bank's founding. Does that make LFS's logo an error coin? A fantasy? Poor research? Whatever the case, we note that 2006 is the company's 100th anniversary; perhaps a new logo design will be part of the celebration.



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In Memoriam:

Thomas Joseph Hammond (1952-2005)

Thomas Joseph Hammond, NNA member, well-known coin dealer and owner of T.J.'s Midwest Coin Cabinet in North Platte passed away suddenly on October 27, 2005. He was 52 years old. Besides running his coin store, Tom was also an English teacher at North Platte High School. He was born Dec. 19, 1952 in San Antonio. He grew up in the Denver area and graduated from Regis College with a degree in English. He later obtained a Master's Degree from the University of Nebraska. Tom leaves behind a wife, Keri, and a daughter, Chelsea. He was a popular dealer and will be missed by all.

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P.O. Box 6194
Lincoln, NE 68506



John L. Veach LM 17
1012 Galloway Circle
Lincoln, NE 68512

68512+2341-12 8025